REMARKS

Claims 1-67 were pending in the patent application at the time the present Office Action was mailed. Claims 1, 11, 18, 35, 47, 54, and 67 are amended by this response. No claims are canceled or added by this response. Accordingly, claims 1-67 remain pending.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-67 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent No. 6,232,971 ("Haynes") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,487,143 ("Southgate"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

A. Haynes

Haynes teaches a technique for providing variable-modality child windows. "'Modality' refers to the level of interaction allowed when a child window has been opened." (Haynes, 2:11-12.) Conventionally, a child window can be modal or modeless. When a child window prevents a user from interacting with another window (e.g., a parent window), the child window is said to be modal. In contrast, when a child window does not prevent a user from interacting with another window, the child window is said to be modeless. Haynes introduces the concept of partially modeless windows. When a child window is partially modeless, the user is "permitted to interface with only some of the functions on the other windows on the desktop while the child window is open." (Haynes, 4:33-35.)

B. Southgate

Southgate teaches a technique for providing tiled and overlapped window areas. Conventionally, windows of an application can be either tiled or overlapped, but generally not both. When windows are tiled, "each window is adjacent to other windows that may exist on the screen." (Southgate, 3:1-3.) When windows are overlapped, a window may obscure portions or an entirety of another window that appears "behind" or "below" it. Southgate introduces a window management technique that provides both tiled and overlapped windows in an application "by providing two separate areas on the display

screen. The first area is the traditional overlapped window area where windows are handled as with traditional GUIs. The second area is the 'tiled' area where windows are not allowed to overlap." (Southgate, 26-30.) Southgate's Figure 7, which is reproduced below for immediate reference, illustrates this technique.

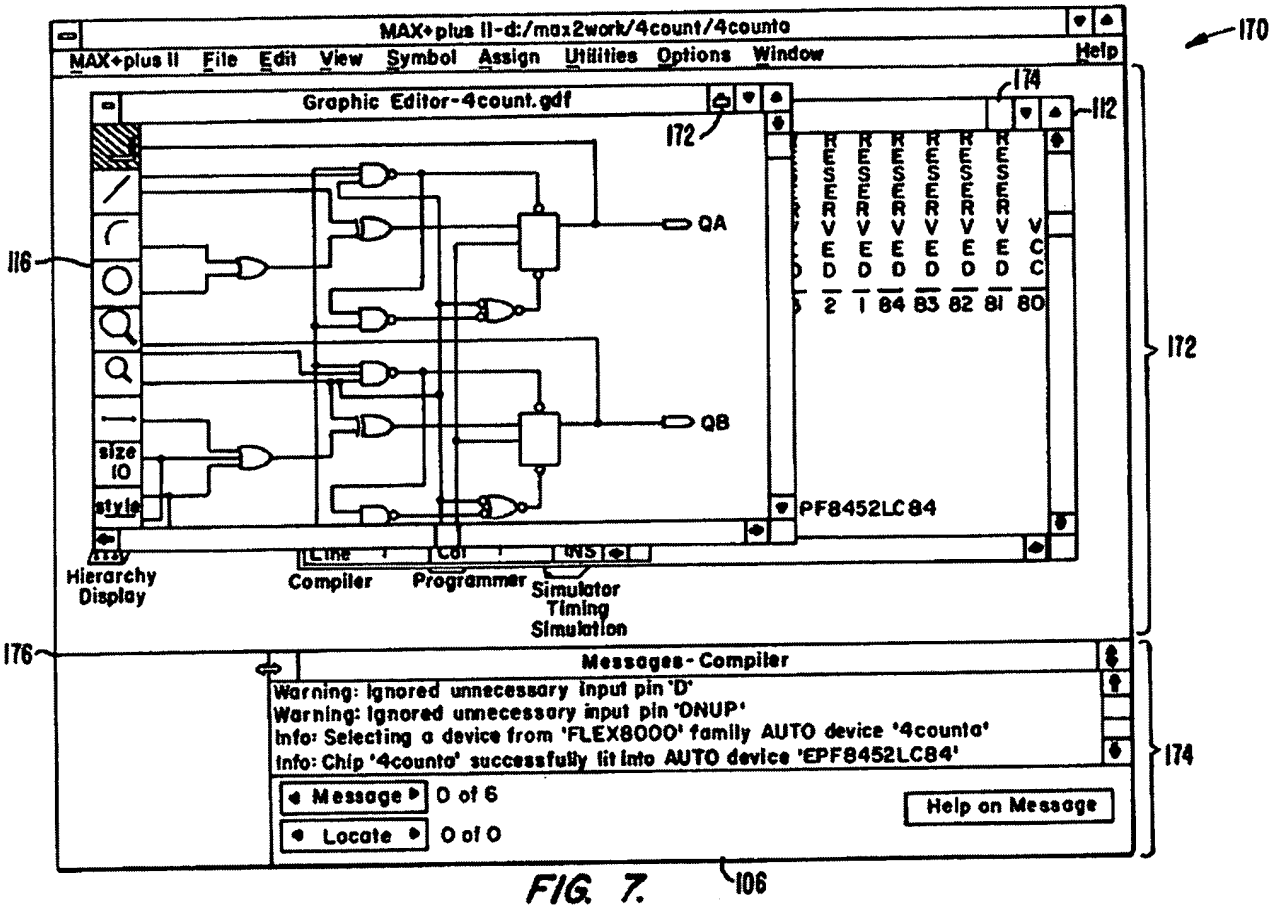

FIG. 7.

Southgate's Figure 7

The figure illustrates an overlapped window area 172 and a tiled window area 174.

C. Applicant's Technology

Applicant's technology is directed to managing screen real estate in an application's window. The application employs modeless windows that are displayed in a client area of

the application's window. The modeless windows can be anchored, such as to an edge of the client area or application window. (See, e.g., applicant's specification at 4:22-24.) When a modeless window is anchored, it may be in various states, such as collapsed or open. (See, e.g., applicant's specification at 6:29.) An anchored window can be pinned open or not pinned. A user can pin a window in the open state. An anchored window that is not pinned in the open state will automatically return to its collapsed state when the mouse pointer selects a window element that is not near or within the anchored window. (See, e.g., applicant's specification at 7:4-6.)

D. Analysis

Applicant is unable to find several elements of the rejected independent claims in the applied references. Nevertheless, applicant has amended some of the rejected independent claims to more particularly claim his technology.

Independent claims 1 and 11 now recite "the anchored modeless window having a collapsed or open state." Applicant is unable to find any teaching or suggestion in the applied references that a modeless application window can be collapsed or open. Conventionally, windows (including modeless windows) are either (1) closed and invisible or (2) open and visible. When a window is collapsed, a portion of the window is visible (e.g., its title) and the window automatically expands to its regular size when input from a mouse is proximate to the collapsed window. Whereas claims 1 and 11 previously recited "when the modeless window is in a collapsed state," applicant has amended the claims to more particularly claim that the determining occurs when the window is in the collapsed state.

Claims 19 and 28 recite "moving a present location of the first modeless window if a document movement command from a user is received that causes the second modeless window to be moved to a position which would overlap a preferred location of the first modeless window." This behavior is described in the applicant's specification, e.g., at

12:25-14:5. The Office Action appears to equate this functionality with moving windows from Southgate's overlapped window area to the tiled window area and points to Southgate, columns 8-10. (See Office Action, page 7.) In applicant's technology, a modeless window can appear "above" or "in front of" a window with which the modeless window is associated. When this occurs, the modeless window may obscure a portion of the associated window. In contrast, Southgate's technique only relates to moving a window from an overlapped area (in which windows may overlap) to a tiled area (in which windows may not overlap). Thus, the applied references neither teach nor suggest "moving a present location of the first modeless window if a document movement command from a user is received that causes the second modeless window to be moved to a position which would overlap a preferred location of the first modeless window."

Furthermore, independent claims 19 and 28 recite that the first and second modeless windows are "in the document window." A document window is "an on-screen window (enclosed work area) in which the user can create, view, or work on a document." (Microsoft Computer Dictionary, 5th Edition, page 172.) Southgate teaches management of overlapped or tiled document windows. Supposing momentarily that Southgate's technique applied to modeless windows within a document window (e.g., if windows 106, 112, and 116 of Southgate's Figure 7 were modeless windows and not document windows), then when a user moves any of those windows in the overlapped area, other windows in the overlapped area would move such that the modeless windows do not overlap. This is clearly not what Southgate teaches.

Independent claims 36 and 47 recite "collapsing the modeless window such that a title bar is displayed when user input selects a display position that is not near the modeless window." As an example, suppose a modeless window is open but not pinned and a user selects a portion of the modeless window's parent document window, the modeless window would collapse automatically and may display its title. According to the Office Action, "Southgate... discloses the title name in the 'title bar' of a window might be obscured along with the contents of the window." (Office Action, page 9.) The Office

Action appears to identify the background section of Southgate at 2:21-22, which recites an aspect of the problem with conventional techniques. The conventional techniques to which Southgate appears to refer "for arranging windows so that at least a small portion of each window is visible" is similar to the "Minimize All" command available in some operating systems and applications, which minimizes all visible document windows. However, applicant can find no teaching or suggestion in the applied references indicating "collapsing the modeless window such that a title bar is displayed when user input selects a display position that is not near the modeless window," (Claims 36 and 47, emphasis added) and the Office Action provides no such teaching or suggestion.

Independent claims 55 and 60 recite "in response to determining that the second modeless child window would overlap the first modeless child window, moving the first modeless child window to a new location in which the second modeless child window does not overlap the first child window; and anchoring the first modeless child window in a position that does not interfere with the preferred location of the second modeless child window." The Office Action indicates that these claims "are rejected under the same rationale used in claim 19 above." (Office Action, page 10.) However, claim 19 does not include language contained in claims 55 and 60 including, e.g., "in response to determining that the second modeless child window would overlap the first modeless child window" and "anchoring the first modeless child window in a position that does not interfere with the preferred location of the second modeless child window." Applicant is unable to find any teaching or suggestion in the applied references for at least this claim language.

The Office Action rejects independent claim 66 "in light of the rationale used in claims 1 and 19 above." These grounds of rejection were traversed above.

The Office Action rejects independent claim 67 "in light of the rationale used in claims 60 and 62 above." These grounds of rejection were traversed above.

Because the applied references neither teach nor suggest the features discussed above, the independent claims cannot be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Because the dependent claims import the limitations from the claims on which they depend, they also cannot be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Moreover, the claims recite a novel combination of elements that is neither taught nor suggested by the applied references.

Based on the above amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-6478.

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Respectfully submitted,

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